

(continued from previous page)

Oh, where?

Never mind, he said. As long as you behave yourselves, I don't mind.

I heard Ken give a wriggle in the back, and he glanced in his rear mirror.

I think you've got us wrong. Who do you think we are? I ran my fingers through my hair. I must have been looking rough.

It's all right, he said. I don't mind. He thought I was protesting.

Well, just as you like. But you're quite wrong, you know.

It's no business of mine, he said. You can do what you like.

No, you're wrong. Who do you think we are?

It's O.K., I know.

No you don't, I said. Come on, who are we?

Never mind.

No, come on, tell me.

It doesn't matter, he said. Well, you're off a boat, aren't you?

Is that it—and I went on to explain. It cleared the air and I found we were both voting for the same party after all.

He dropped us at a bridge. I go over here. That's the road to Taupo. You'll get a lift all right, there are lots of transports going through.

Sure enough the A.A. sign showed Taupo, so we walked down the road and found a little shade to sit under. Now it was hot and we hadn't got far. For a long time nothing came our way at all. The few cars we heard coming all turned off over the bridge, suddenly cutting off their dust cloud and leaving it for us to watch as it slowly floated into the river. When the dust storm did bear down in the wake of a small truck, it swirled on over us, the driver signalling he was only going down the road. There were two youths and a dog standing in the back. We were out of luck. Surely somebody had to go to Taupo on election day. We waited. Then we decided that, if nobody wanted to take us to Taupo, we would go with them to Wairoa. About 20 sheep scrambled and jostled their way up, followed by the two youths and the truck. The dog's tongue was hanging but it sped about the flock and yapped—patient and business-like. The boys went past with a nod and a yell at the dog, and the truck pulled up beside us.

Hallo. This is the road to Taupo, isn't it?

Well, yes, but it's not the main road. It joins up with the main road a few miles on.

We rode back to the bridge hanging on to the running boards.

It was worse there, no shade, and dust from the big, fast cars to smother us. A man ought to hang himself from the A.A. sign, said Ken.

And then we were riding in a coupe with a young farmer who could only take us a few miles. Travelling, cool, on the inside looking out, the radio ebbing and flowing. Insects smacked against the windscreen and sometimes they swung in through the open windows.

PITY you're not shearers. We're going to have trouble this year, I think. Some of the Maori boys back from the war found that they could drain their

swamp land. They grew good tomatoes on it last year, and now they're all having a go at it.

We climbed out at the top of a steep hill.

Seems a rotten place to leave anybody but I'm afraid it's the best I can do.

The view was fine. High country in grass, hot and dry, a few slips and some patches of burn. Hot and a hard, distant, blue sky. We sunbathed a bit and sang a bit and hoped the world was having a good dinner. We'd almost forgotten about cars when one suddenly went the other way — a midget alien, even to newcomers like us. Walking down the long winding hill, we were glad of the patches of shade from the bank. A drover rode up slowly with tired dogs at heel. He was yelling and whistling to one that had gone down into the gully. He left off to say Hot day, in reply to our G'day, and then went on calling the dog. We heard him still as he came out onto each bend above.

Half-way down we found a spring weeping out of the bank, and Ken was getting his face wet drinking at it when a black car rushed down the hill. It was going fast, but it pulled up.

All right, get in and let's have a look at you.

We got into the back seat.

Who are you?

It was a policeman with his wife and daughter. A lot of sailors must desert at Napier, but we soon satisfied him. He was supervising the country booths. He told us about a bottomless lake and floating islands and the Tutira country, and handed us over to a truck driver at his next call.

I DON'T think you'll get through. Nothing doing today. Everybody's closed down for the day. I'm taking this lot to the next store, and then I'm finished. Got to vote yet. A bee browsed against the window screen and he made a snatch at it whenever it came down from the web-draped corner. In the end it ducked out a side window. It was hot in the dusty cab, hot from the sun and the oily heat of the heavy engine. Growling up the hills, shuddering a bit at the bends.

He left the storekeeper to unload his stuff, and we went with him down to the one-room school to vote. The desks had been pushed back for the day. Ours were the first absentee votes they had had, but it was quite simple. The school teacher and his wife fixed us up and we voted sitting on a desk in the corner under an animal alphabet. He said it had been a headache and they'd done some things they shouldn't have. They were certainly having the worst of the day. Back country families had yet to vote.

The local pub was closed and there were a few people sitting round outside it.

Well then, why don't you try the door? advised one, squinting sagely into the sun.

We went in and closed it behind us. Ken ordered.

You fellows voted yet. All right. And he served us.

It's my rule nobody's got the right to drink, if they don't exercise their right

(continued on next page)

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## VI-MAX Xmas Recipes

### XMAS CAKE

8oz. butter	4oz. cherries
8oz. sugar (light brown)	4oz. almonds
4oz. white flour or fine wholemeal	4oz. peel
4oz. VI-MAX (Fine)	1 dessertspoon cinnamon
6 eggs	1 tablespoon spice
8oz. sultanas	1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
8oz. currants	2 tablespoons wine, sherry or brandy
1lb. seeded raisins	Grated rind 1 lemon

METHOD: Cream butter and sugar, add beaten eggs alternately with sifted flour and VI-MAX. Add prepared fruit and lastly wine, sherry, or brandy. Beat well. Bake in greased tin for 3 1/2 to 4 hours.

### XMAS PUDDING

3oz. VI-MAX (Coarse or Fine)	1 dessertspoon treacle
3oz. white flour or fine wholemeal	1/4 teaspoon salt
2oz. breadcrumbs	4 tablespoons milk
6oz. suet	4oz. brown sugar
4oz. currants	1 teaspoon spice
4oz. seeded raisins	1oz. peel
4oz. sultanas	1 level teaspoon soda
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg	2 eggs
	2oz. almonds

METHOD: Prepare fruit and mix with all dry ingredients. Mix with beaten eggs in which treacle has been dissolved. Add soda dissolved in milk and put into a greased basin. Cover and steam at least four hours.